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Remarks

The allowance of Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 18-24 and indicated allowability of dependent Claim 4 (pending correction of the antecedent basis discrepancy, which has been effected herein) and dependent Claims 13 and 14 (now rewritten in independent form) is gratefully acknowledged. An informality in the specification and in Claim 9 has been corrected herewith, to bring the corrected portions into conformance with, e.g., the first paragraph of the summary.

This leaves as the sole remaining issues the rejections of Claims 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Ultican et al., USPP 2002/0075593, and the rejections of Claims 10, 12, and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Ultican et al.

As now amended, Claim 9 recites that the first protrusion pad closely and completely surrounds the read element, while the second protrusion pad closely and completely surrounds the write element. The relied-upon "pads" of Ultican et al., (i.e., the two spaced-apart ends of the U-shaped pad 80 between which both read and write head are disposed) cannot be said to conform to this recitation.

Additionally, Applicant does not acquiesce that the limitations of, e.g., Claims 15-17 are "well known features" hence *ipso facto* rendering these claims unpatentable. The present application refers to still-pending, commonly owned applications for details regarding certain of the rejected limitations, meaning that the referred-to applications are not prior art to the present application under Section 102(e). Thus, Applicant has not averred that the rejected limitations are well known, much less that they are well known *in combination with the other elements* in the chain of claims from which they depend. Accordingly, because no prior art evidence has been produced to support the allegation underpinning the rejection, the rejection is improper.

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The Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned at (619) 338-8075 for any reason which would advance the instant application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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